



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**U.S. CRACKS DOWN ON NEW YORK ESCORT SERVICE
FOR INTERSTATE PROSTITUTION AND LARGE-SCALE
MONEY LAUNDERING**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MARTIN FICKE, the Special Agent in Charge of the New York Office of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), announced that ELENA TROCHTENKOVA, 40, of Queens, New York, RADY ABDEL SALEM ABBASSY, 45, of Brooklyn, New York, and VALERIE HAIRSTON, 50, of New York, New York, were arrested yesterday on federal prostitution and money laundering charges relating to the operation of New York Elites, an escort service in Manhattan.

According to a Complaint unsealed yesterday in Manhattan federal court, TROCHTENKOVA and ABBASSY own and operate New York Elites, and HAIRSTON works for New York Elites as a dispatcher for prostitutes. The Complaint alleges that from as early as 2000, New York Elites employed women to act as prostitutes. Customers of New

York Elites could call a number on the New York Elites website, speak with a dispatcher, and, for an hourly rate of between \$500 and \$1500, hire a prostitute for sex. The customers could express an interest in specific women advertised on the New York Elites website, or women with specific physical features, or women who would engage in desired types of sexual activities.

According to the Complaint, the New York Elites website advertised that, in addition to meeting clients in New York City, its escorts were available to travel domestically and internationally. As alleged in the Complaint, these women traveled to cities outside New York for the purpose of meeting men in hotel rooms to trade sex for money. Financial records associated with TROCHTCHENKOVA and ABBASSY from 2001 until 2004 show hotel bookings for women in 22 cities across the United States, and that, in September 2003 alone, TROCHTCHENKOVA and ABBASSY spent over \$60,000 on hotel bookings, it is alleged.

The Complaint further alleges that TROCHTCHENKOVA and ABBASSY used bank accounts in the names of other companies to conduct the financial business of New York Elites, including receiving credit card payments and writing checks to their prostitute employees. These accounts show financial activity, from in or about 2002 until in or about 2004, in the amount of approximately \$5.5 million.

The Complaint charges TROCHTCHENKOVA, ABBASSY, and HAIRSTON with one count of conspiracy to transport an individual to engage in prostitution, and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

If convicted of the charges, TROCHTCHENKOVA, ABBASSY, and HAIRSTON face a maximum sentence of 30 years in prison and an \$11 million fine.

Mr. KELLEY praised the efforts of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and said that the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorneys BENJAMIN GRUENSTEIN and LISA KOROLOGOS are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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